

Healeyfield Parish Council

Serving Castleside and District



Striving to keep our community thriving

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Chairman's Annual Report 2015/2016

Over the past year, the Parish council has continued to respond to the needs of the community by listening and responding to local issues. 2015/16 has seen the Parish Council take on new projects, some of which are continuing into the new municipal year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members, County Councillors and our Clerk for all of their sterling work and support throughout the past year.

The Parish Council held a consultation event in spring 2015 to determine resident's views on future plans for the Parish Wood. The event was well attended and included a tour of the wood which enabled people to familiarize themselves with the areas that would be most affected. Surveys were available and it is the analysis of those that have formed the basis for our latest management plan. Simon Wilson from AONB led the consultation and we continue to work with him on implementing the plan. It is hoped that work will be carried out in October 2016 to February 2017.

The Parish Council, took advantage of the 'Parish Paths Partnership' scheme run by Durham County Council. A grant from that scheme paid for the clearing and re-surfacing of the Sandy Path, located to the east of The Horse and Groom Public House. The path is very popular, particularly for those with dogs, it is now a much more accessible and enjoyable route.

The 'Big Clean Up' event has been run twice in the past year and has proved to be quite a success. In 2016, almost 40 people including staff from McDonalds, Consett, assisted to litter pick the village with a total of 23 bags of litter being collected.

In 2015, the Parish Council applied for a grant from the Mid-Durham AAP to purchase a defibrillator from the British Heart Foundation scheme for the village. This was successful and it was recently installed at The Village Hall. The provision of the Defibrillator in the village could provide the early response needed to save a life.

In July, our Parish Clerk, Gemma Miller, resigned. Gemma had worked for the Parish Council for approximately 3 years and I thank Gemma for all of her work for the Parish. She dealt

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professionally with some very challenging situations. Ruth Wright was subsequently appointed to fill the vacancy. Ruth brings a wealth of working knowledge to the Parish and is currently working towards a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

Phil Archer and Alf Addison also resigned from the Parish Council. My thanks go to Phil and Alf for all of their efforts throughout their time with the Parish. In recognition of his 30 years on the Parish Council and his work with young people, Alf was made an Honorary Freeman and this was marked with a ceremony and a social gathering. This subsequently left the Parish Council with two vacancies. One, following a successful interview, was filled by Kristina Spencer who brings her skills, talents and experience to the Parish Council. The other position remains vacant.

In December we again 'switched on' the village Christmas tree lights. The popularity of this event has increased greatly over the past few years. The addition of Consett Brass, Tea and Mince Pies, provided by members of St Johns, really marked the beginning of the festive season.

With the kind assistance of St John's Church, Healeyfield joined with many Commonwealth countries in raising the new Commonwealth flag at 10am on Monday 14th March 2016. Children from the local school took part and the flag was raised by Alf Addison. It is hoped to make this an annual event and it encourages children and adults to think about their shared heritage with 53 other countries.

We have reviewed and where necessary rationalized, all areas of our budget. It has been necessary to increase our precept by 77p this year an increase which will continue over the next 4 years giving a total of increase over that period of £3.28 (based on band 'D' property).

As we move into 2016/17, we will continue to strive to engage with the residents of Healeyfield and keep it thriving. One way we are doing this is by celebrating the Queen Elizabeth's 90th Birthday on 12th June 2016. We are hopeful that residents will come together and share in an afternoon tea with entertainment.

Other projects for the ensuing year, other than aforementioned, are the:
Restoration of Castleside War Memorial,
WW1 Memorial Garden,
Clearing and planting of part of Consett Road,
Bulb planting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Pearson". The signature is enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn oval border.

Adam Pearson
Chairman, 2015/2016.